

Astrobiology and the Sacred

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Astrobiology affords new understandings of life on earth and the possibility of life beyond earth. These new understandings raise profound implications for humanity. It is important that these implications be explored rigorously. The Templeton Foundation recently awarded the University of Arizona a Templeton Research Lecture Grant on the theme “***Astrobiology and the Sacred: Implications of Life Beyond Earth***”. Coupled with joint sponsorship by The LAPLACE Center, (the NAI Node at UA) a series of research lectures plus ancillary speakers, events and activities will stimulate a conversation involving Astrobiology, the Humanities, the Arts, Religion and Philosophy over a period of three years. Building on the resources of UA and its tradition of constructive engagement of science and religion this series will stimulate a responsible debate of the implications of astrobiology research in a public forum.

This contribution highlights the events conducted so far and outlines plans for the years ahead. Themes of the events, the main contributors, the nature of the audiences, target issues of the presentations and the resulting discussions are illustrated with anecdotal and statistical information. A web site announces the events and communicates elements of the dialogue as it evolves. Products of the lectures and events are books plus tangible and on-line digital materials. Education and Public Outreach activities, such as workshops for

teachers, are planned. An invitation is extended to the Astrobiology Community to engage in and support this dialogue with questions and suggestions so that resources produced have widespread value and applicability.